

"Routes" Chronology of Major Events in the Evolution of Public Transportation in Metropolitan Seattle

1851

September 15: Luther Collins and other farmers settle in Duwamish delta.
November 13: Denny party disembarks to found "New York" at Alki Point.

1852

February 15: Alki settlers relocate to eastern shore of Elliott Bay.
March: "Doc" Maynard arrives in village to found a store at request of Chief Seattle, and convinces town to take chief's name for its own.

1853

Fairy becomes first American steamboat to operate on Puget Sound.
October: Henry Yesler locates Puget Sound's first steam-powered saw mill at foot of "Skid Road" (now Yesler Way).

1854

Congress separates Washington Territory from Oregon.

1858

Eliza Anderson becomes the first "Mosquito Fleet" passenger ferry on Puget Sound.

1869

City of Seattle re-incorporates (1865 incorporation was flawed).

1871

Robert Abrams offers rides up Skid Road for 50 cents.

1873

Tacoma wins coveted western terminus for Northern Pacific Railroad, but rail does not arrive for a decade.

1879

Seattle approves first street railway franchise, but the line is not built.

1880

Regular wagon and jitney service common in Seattle and nearby towns.

1884

September 23: Frank Osgood inaugurates "Seattle Street Railway" with horsedrawn streetcars on Second Aveune.

1886

March 22: Seattle Electric Light Company fires up Seattle's first electric generator.

1887

September 28: J.M. Thompson inaugurates "Lake Washington Cable Railway" Additional cable railways were quickly built on First Avenue, Queen Anne Hill, James Street and Madison Street.

Frank Sprague demonstrates first electric street railway in Richmond, Virginia.

1889

March 30: Osgood et al. introduce first electric streetcars on Second Avenue line.

June 6: Much of downtown Seattle destroyed by fire, but electric streetcars keep running.

Fred Sander begins building first "interurban" railway from downtown Seattle to City of Georgetown (which is reached in 1893).

J.K. Edmiston begins building Rainier Valley Electric Railway, an interurban line to Renton (renamed Seattle, Renton & Southern in 1896, and later, the Seattle & Rainier Valley Railway).

Congress admits State of Washington into the Union.

1890

October: L. H. Griffith extends streetcar line along new Westlake Avenue to Lake Union and north to City of Ballard.

1893

Great Northern Railroad inaugurates direct transcontinental service to Seattle.

Economic "Panic of 1893" cripples Seattle area.

1899

Stone & Webster, a national utility holding company, consolidates ownership of Seattle's 22 street railways and private electric utilities as Seattle Electric Company.

1900

King County takes over ferry service on Lake Washington

Seattle awards 40 year franchise to Seattle Electric to run street railways.

First Automobile (electric-powered) arrives in Seattle.

1901

Henry Bucey begins building Seattle-Tacoma Interurban Railway, which is soon acquired by Stone & Webster and renamed the Puget Sound Electric Railway.

Fred Sander begins building Seattle-Everett Interurban Railway, which is soon acquired by Stone & Webster.

Queen Anne cable cars replaced by electric streetcars assisted by "counterbalance" on the hill's southern grade.

1902

Seattle voters approve creation of municipally-owned "City Light" to compete with Seattle Electric.

September 25: Puget Sound Electric Railway inaugurates interurban service between Seattle and Tacoma.

City of West Seattle purchases private street railway, and becomes first U.S. municipality to own and operate its own streetcar system (West Seattle sold the system to Seattle Electric before the city was annexed by Seattle in 1907).

1906

Great Northern completes tunnel under downtown Seattle and opens King Street Station.

1910

Stone & Webster's Bellingham and Skagit Railway begins building interurban line from Bellingham to Mount Vernon.

Civic reformers and Advocates of public ownership organize Municipal League.

1911

March 7: Seattle voters approve purchase of Rainier Valley street railway. When the sale cannot be closed, the bond funds are reprogrammed to purchase "Division A" line from Seattle to Ballard.

Northern Pacific and other railroads open Union Station.

1912

March 5: Seattle voters reject Virgil Bogue's visionary "Plan of Seattle," which included "rapid transit" system and interurban rail tunnel under Lake Washington.

April 8: Seattle & Rainier Valley Railway workers organize Local 587 of today's Amalgamated Transit Union and win collective bargaining rights.

Stone & Webster consolidates Seattle-Everett and Mount Vernon-Bellingham interurbans as Southern and Northern Divisions of Pacific Northwest Traction Company.

Stone & Webster folds Seattle Electric Company, Puget Sound Electric Railway, Pacific Northwest Traction, and other holdings into larger Puget Sound Power, Light and Traction Company, forerunner of today's Puget Power.

1914

April 1: Service begins on Seattle-owned Division A line from downtown to Ballard.

First automobile ferry, Issaquah, begins service on Puget Sound.

1915

Stone & Webster's first "motor stage" bus service from Seattle to Bothell flops.

1916

July 17: Strike by members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 cripples Seattle Electric street railways in Seattle.

1917

July 4: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers opens Ship Canal linking Salmon Bay, Lake Union and Lake Washington.

1918

November 5: Seattle voters approve City's purchase of Seattle Electric's street railways for an inflated \$15 million.

1921

Stone & Webster's Interurban Motor Company closes the gap between its northern interurban railways with stage service between Everett and Mount Vernon on the new Highway 99.

1922

State Supreme Court ruling blocks Seattle from using general tax funds to pay street railway debts and operating costs.

1927

Pacific Northwest Traction opens new rail and stage terminal at Ninth and Stewart (now the Greyhound Terminal), and introduces direct motor stage service between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.

1928

Salt Lake City introduces new trackless trolley coaches.

Pacific Northwest Traction shuts down interurban passenger rail service between Mount Vernon and Bellingham.

December 30: Puget Sound Electric shuts down interurban rail service between Seattle and Tacoma.

1932

Completion of Aurora Bridge closes last gap in Highway 99.
Stone & Webster reorganizes interurban rail and stage services as North Coast Lines.

1934

New federal anti-trust laws and Security Exchange Commission break up Stone & Webster's holding companies. Puget Power reorganizes under "home rule" board of trustees, but retains former transit properties.

1937

January 1: Seattle & Rainier Valley Railway folds, ending interurban service between Seattle and Renton.

January 8: West Seattle streetcar jumps tracks, killing three and injuring 59 passengers in Seattle's worst streetrail accident.

March 9: Seattle voters reject "Beeler Plan" to replace streetrail with trackless trolleys and motor buses.

1939

February 20: North Coast Lines ends interurban rail service between Seattle and Everett.

May: Federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation loans Seattle \$10 million to pay off street railway debts and convert to trackless trolleys and buses.

August: New Seattle Transportation Commission takes over management of municipal transit services.

1940

February 18: James Street cable railway closes down.

April 13: Madison Street cable railway closes down.

July 2: Lacey V. Murrow Floating Bridge opens between Seattle and Mercer Island.

August 9: Yesler Way cable railway closes down.

August 10: Streetcar service on Queen Anne Counterbalance closes down.

1941

April 13: Last Seattle streetcar completes route to Fremont.

December 7: Attack on Pearl Harbor draws U.S. into World War II, which spurs transit patronage.

1944

Annual Seattle Transit ridership peaks at all-time record of 130 million passenger trips.

1947

Puget Power sells off stage and bus companies.

1950

November 7: Seattle voters barely approve City Light's purchase of Puget Power's remaining electric utility facilities and services in the city limits. The last vestige of Stone & Webster's hegemony is erased.

Census records King County population of 733,000, of whom 468,000 live in Seattle.

1951

State of Washington purchases Puget Sound Navigation Company fleet and organizes state Ferry System.

1952

November 5: King County voters reject new County Charter advocated by Municipal League and a young attorney named James R. Ellis.

1953

Alaskan Way Viaduct opens to divert Highway 99 traffic off of downtown Seattle streets.

State of Washington Highway Department begins planning future Central Seattle Freeway (now Interstate 5). It rejects Seattle Transit Commission proposal for rail transit right-of-way in the median, but accepts possible designs for express bus service.

State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects advocates creation of "Puget Sound Regional Planning Council," which meets for first time as an advisory body in April 1954.

1956

Governor Langlie organizes state commission on "metropolitan problems."

Federal Aid Highway Act authorizes billions of dollars for construction of interstate system of "national defense highways.)

November 23: ATU strike shuts down Seattle Transit System for two weeks until court injunction forces drivers back to work.

1957

State Legislature narrowly approves creation of "metropolitan municipal corporations" to organize regional sewage treatment, water supply,

comprehensive planning, garbage disposal, park development, and transit systems.

State Highway Department rejects second Seattle Transit System proposal to incorporate light rail transit in new Interstate 5 freeway design. San Francisco begins planning for Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART).

1958

January: Puget Sound Regional Planning Council reorganizes as Puget Sound Governmental Council (PSGC).

March 11: Voters reject creation of "Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle" to undertake sewage treatment, transit, and comprehensive planning.

September 9: Voters approve creation of Metro to organize sewage treatment system only.

October 1: Fifteen-member Metro Council meets for first time and elects C. Cary Donworth as its chair.

1960

Seattle population grows to 560,000 while King County suburban areas swell by 43 percent to 378,000 residents. King County vehicle registrations double from 1950 to reach 373,000.

Reversible lanes installed on Mercer Island Floating Bridge to handle rush hour congestion.

PSGC and State launch Puget Sound Regional Transportation Study to plan new system. The Study's director, John Mladinov, rejects inclusion of rail transit and focuses on new highways.

Special "Metropolitan Transportation Committee" recommends that Metro activate its latent authority for mass transit.

1962

Federal law makes regional planning a precondition for highway funding. Evergreen Point Floating Bridge opens.

September 11: King County voters reject referendum to authorize Metro to plan and operate a mass transit system.

1964

U.S. Senator Warren Magnuson wins approval of federal Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA).

King County adopts Comprehensive Plan calling for development of "urban centers" outside Seattle.

March 10: Seattle voters reject "Committee for Modernization of Electric Transit" (COMET) initiative to prevent Seattle Transit from scrapping trackless trolleys (but costs of new buses give trolleys a reprieve).

1965

PSGC study recommends development of rail rapid transit system.

November 3: James Ellis advocates a "Forward Thrust" package of civic improvements including rail transit in a speech to the Downtown Seattle Rotary.

1966

March: "Committee of 200" forms to guide Forward Thrust planning.

Puget Sound Regional Transportation Study rejects rail transit and proposes new system of Eastside freeways and cross-Sound bridge to Vashon Island.

1967

October 30: Forward Thrust unveils \$1.155 million plan for rail and bus transit system. Local bond levy would raise \$385 million. Forward thrust includes 11 other bond issues which with rail total \$815 million in local bond levies requiring 60 percent majorities to pass.

1968

February 13: Voters pass seven Forward Thrust proposals, including the Kingdome, but rail plan garners only 51 percent approval and fails to validate. Forward Thrust begins organizing new rail plan and three other civic bond issues.

November 5: King County voters approve new "home rule" Charter creating 9-member County Council and elected County Executive.

1969

State Legislature authorizes use of Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) for transit if matched by local tax dollars.

November: Seattle voters repeal \$1 "household tax" levied by City Council to subsidize transit system.

1970

Seattle population shrinks to 531,000 while rest of King County population balloons 67 percent to 626,000 residents.

Aerospace recession leads to "Boeing Bust" and ultimate layoffs for 65,000 Boeing workers.

May 19: Voters reject all four Forward Thrust proposals, and only 46 percent approve rail bonds. Forward Thrust disbands.

September 8: Seattle Transit launches "Blue Streak" express bus service between Northgate park-and-ride lot and downtown Seattle.

November 3: Voters approve reorganization of independent Seattle Transportation Commission as new city department reporting to Mayor Wes Uhlman.

Federal and State Environmental Protection Acts mandate preparation of "Environmental Impact Statements" (EIS) prior to undertaking major projects.

1971

State Legislature authorizes transit systems to seek voter approval for 0.3 percent sales tax (raised to 0.6 percent in 1980), makes Metro boundaries co-terminus with King County, and expands Metro Council to 36 members through addition of all King County Councilmembers and County Executive.

Puget Sound Governmental Conference launches study to plan "all-bus" transit system for 1980.

Federal court halts I-90 construction because of "inadequate" EIS.

1972

February 8: Seattle voters scrap Bay Freeway (proposed to solve the "Mercer Mess" between I-5 and Seattle Center) and R.H. Thomson Expressway from University District to Southeast Seattle.

September 19: King County voters approve 0.3 percent sales tax increase to allow Metro to take over Seattle Transit and suburban bus companies and implement "1980 Transit Plan" with a goal of carrying 54 million annual riders by the end of 1980. Seattle voters reject second COMET initiative to turn Seattle Transit System over to City Light.

November 7: State voters reject "Washington Futures" bonds to fund \$50 million in transit and highway improvements.

Seattle and suburban transit riderships sink to new low of 31 million passengers.

1973

January 1: Metro Transit begins operations.

State Legislature tries to renege on matching transit sales tax with MVET funds. Compromise "sunsets" match in 1980.

March: Carle Salley named first Metro Transit Director.

September: Free "Magic Carpet" transit zone created in downtown Seattle. State opens first "High Occupancy Lane" (HOV) on SR520.

October: OPEC declares embargo on oil exports to the United States, and transit ridership leaps 8 percent for the year.

UMTA approves \$86 million grant to fund new Metro Transit vehicles and facilities. It is the largest "rubber-wheel" grant in UMTA history.

Federal law gives localities ability to "withdraw and substitute" approved highway funds to build mass transit systems.

Metro Transit attracts 33 million passengers in first year, an 6 percent increase over former systems' ridership.

1974

Metro organizes Citizens Transit Advisory Committee, which elects David Sprague as its first chair.

Congress passes National Mass Transportation Assistance Act to subsidize transit operations and imposes 55-mph speed limit on Interstate Highways.

June: Richard Page succeeds C.V. Gibbs as Metro Executive Director

November: ATU members walk-off job for two weeks.

Newly elected Seattle City Councilmember George Benson airs idea for operating vintage streetcars along central waterfront.

Metro Transit orders 145 AM General diesel coaches (70 more were ordered in 1976).

1975

January: Metro opens first "Flyer" freeway station at Montlake.

State Legislature blocks use of MVET funds for transit without express appropriation, and Metro sues to release matching funds.

Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties "secede" from PSGC, forcing reorganization to create new "Puget Sound Council of Governments" (PSCOG) with "sub-regional councils" in charge of county-level planning reviews.

MetroTRANSITION planning for 1990 begins.

Carle Salley resigns as Metro Transit director.

1976

January 9: State Supreme Court rules in Metro's favor to release MVET matching funds for transit without appropriation.

February: Metro survives legal challenge to its decision to buy diesel-powered buses rather than ones using natural gas.

April: Charles Collins takes over as Transit director.

June: Metro Transit orders 145 articulated diesel coaches from AM General and MAN Industries. It is the first such order by an American transit system and the largest purchase in the world.

All system planning consolidated in "Transit Development" division.

October: Metro Council replaces 30 zones with just two, representing areas inside and outside Seattle city limits, and sets fares at 30 cents for first zone and 20 cents for second. Senior and disabled rider fares set at 10 cents. During a Seattle visit, UMTA administrator Robert Petricelli praises success of Metro Transit "all-bus" system, but he denies application for rail transit planning while approving funds for Portland's "MAX" system.

December: Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, King County and State Highway Commission sign "Memorandum of Understanding" for smaller I-90 with six traffic lanes and two transit lanes ("3-2T-3"), plus extensive landscaping and lidding.

1977

May: Safeco Insurance becomes first employer to subsidize transit passes for its workers. All jurisdictions finally approve new PSCOG charter.

July: Metro inaugurates first "Paratransit" services in suburbs.
First trials with wheelchair lifts prove disastrous. Metro Transit engineer Ed Hall designs new "Lift-U" system which becomes industry standard.
September: Neil Peterson succeeds Richard Page as Metro Executive Director; Page becomes head of UMTA.
October: ATU members stage "sick-outs" after expiration of contract to protest plan to hire part-time drivers.
December: Metro consolidates executive staff in Exchange Building.
Metro Council commits to "aggressive all-bus" strategy to achieve 120 million annual riders by 1990.

1978

January 9: ATU approves new contract allowing up to half of drivers to be part-time.
January: Trackless trolley system shut down for overhaul with new lines and 109 new trolleys, first built since 1950s.
April: Metro Council commits to make transit fleet fully wheel-chair accessible and approves discounted "taxi scrip" for elderly and disabled citizens. Metro orders 143 new coaches from Flyer Industries of Canada (116 more are ordered in 1979).
August: Exclusive peak-hour bus lanes introduced on Second and Fourth Avenues in downtown Seattle.
U.S. Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams names Aubrey Davis his Region X representative. Kirkland City Councilmember Robert Neir succeeds Davis as chair of Metro Transit Committee.

1979

January 1: New first and second zone fares of 40/60 cents take effect.
August: First articulated coaches enter service; rehabilitated trolley system reopens; and "Bel-Hop" circulator service opens in downtown Bellevue.
September: James Ellis steps down as Metro's general counsel.
October: Multiple lightning strikes cripple new trolley system.
November 6: By nearly three to one, King County voters reject plan to "merge" Metro with King County Government.
Metro opens its eighth park and ride lot, in Federal Way, and completes 900th bus shelter; SeaFirst Bank becomes first employer to fully subsidize worker transit passes; institutes "Safe Driver" program to prevent accidents; and initiates "subscription" services to transport employees to selected suburban work sites.
Thanks to expanded services and high gas prices resulting from revolution in Iran, annual ridership passes 58 million passengers, surpassing original goal of an annual ridership of 54 million by the end of 1980.

1980

Legislature allows transit sales tax to rise to 0.6 percent.

March: Gerald Haugh succeeds Charles Collins as Transit director.

April: MetroTRANSITION downtown advisory committee endorses development of Third Avenue transit mall with peripheral terminals, and future construction of a tunnel for electric trolleys or "dual-mode" diesel/electric buses.

July: C. Cary Donworth retires as chair of Metro Council and Seattle University administrator Dr. Gary Zimmerman is elected to succeed him.

September 16: King County voters turn down bid for higher sales tax.

November 4: King County voters narrowly approve second request for higher sales tax.

November: City of Seattle approves development of Third Avenue transit mall.

Annual ridership peaks at 66.1 million passengers – 12 million more than goal set in 1972.

Census shows 1.27 million King County residents, of whom 494,000 live within the Seattle city limits.

1981

March: Puget Sound Council of Governments study concludes that light rail transit is feasible in the region, which leads to "North Corridor Study" to select a rail route from downtown Seattle to Lynnwood.

March 19: Metro Council adopts 1990 Transit Plan with "target" of 138 million annual riders.

April: Metro establishes Downtown Seattle Transit Project to plan and build transit mall.

June: Metro signs "Incentive Agreement" with City of Bellevue and Bellevue Downtown Association to develop "Transportation Management Association" and increase transit services.

November: Faced with dropping fuel prices and passengers, Metro Council adopts revised "MidRange Program" and lowers 1990 ridership target to 115 million.

1982

February: Metro Council approves 10 cent surcharge on peak-hour bus fares.

April: Ron Tober succeeds Haugh as Metro Transit Director.

May 29: Waterfront Streetcar makes first run.

June: Interim Transit Center opens in downtown Bellevue.

October: Metro Council rejects staff recommendation to locate North Operating Base at NE 135th and Aurora Avenue N.

Additional 202 articulated buses enter service.

Annual ridership slips to 63.5 million passengers.

1983

January: Metro planners propose to shorten downtown Seattle transit mall by moving terminals closer together with underground bus access. Suburban members of Metro begin pressing for dieselbus tunnel, which is opposed by Seattle officials.

September: Neil Peterson proposes downtown Seattle compromise to build Third Avenue tunnel using dual-mode buses.

October: American Public Transit Association names Metro Transit the "Outstanding Major Public Transit System" in the U.S. Alan Gibbs succeeds Neil Peterson as Metro Executive Director.

October 31: Seattle City Council accepts downtown tunnel plan on second vote.

Metro takes over management of Seattle-King County Commuter Pool from Seattle Engineering Department.

PSCOG North Corridor rail transit study expands to become "Multi-Corridor Study" to evaluate eastside and south County routes.

Annual ridership slips to 62.5 million passengers.

1984

Metro Council approves site for North Operating Base at NE 165th and I-5.

Annual ridership rebounds to 65.7 million passengers.

1985

February: Metro Council approves purchase of 236 dual-mode articulated buses.

April: Metro Council approves \$1.5 million art program for downtown Seattle transit tunnel.

July 16: After many delays, federal government approves first grant for downtown Seattle tunnel development.

King County adopts new Comprehensive Plan to concentrate development in existing urbanized areas.

Annual ridership slips anew to 64.8 million passengers.

1986

Metro agrees to share downtown bus stops with Community Transit for express bus service from Snohomish County.

Metro signs "Eastside Action Plan" to increase intra-suburban service among Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue and other destinations.

PSCOG Multi-Corridor rail transit study recommends north, east, and south rail routes for development by year 2020.

Annual ridership slips to 63.2 million passengers.

1987

March 6: Boring for downtown Seattle tunnel begins.

August: Revelation that a tunnel contractor used South African steel beams for temporary shoring prompts Metro Council to pass a policy boycotting all goods "manufactured or fabricated" in South Africa as an expression of disapproval of apartheid.

November: Braking problems compel Metro to recall new articulated trackless trolleys from service (they return the following year).

"Metro Futures" begins to identify long-range planning options.

Annual ridership slips to 61.4 million passengers.

1988

Total passenger use of Metro's Rideshare and Van Pool programs passes 1 million mark, and program earns "Leadership Award" from National Association of Commuter Transportation.

April: Councilman Benson succeeds Bob Neir as Metro Transit Chair and wins Metro Council approval to install light rail tracks in downtown transit tunnel. Ron Tober steps down as Metro Transit Director.

April 8: Metro completes main excavation of downtown transit tunnel.

September: Formal "Metro 2000" long-range planning begins to focus on two bus/rideshare options and rail system to meet high capacity transit needs.

October: Paul Tolliver takes over as Transit Director. Monorail service resumes after year-long shut down during construction of Westlake Center.

November: Lid over Westlake Station completed a year ahead of schedule.

November 8: King County voters endorse advisory ballot proposition to accelerate light rail development by a vote of two to one.

December: Activist Eddie Rye, Jr. complains to Alan Gibbs about plans to use South African granite in downtown Seattle transit tunnel. Gibbs promises to investigate violation of Metro anti-apartheid boycott.

State of Washington charts Rail Development Commission to explore high-speed rail routes and technologies.

Metro begins discussions with Burlington Northern for use of its tracks for "commuter rail" service between Seattle and Tacoma.

Port of Seattle explores reviving ferry service across Lake Washington.

Thanks to "Drive for Excellence" campaign and other factors, annual ridership rebounds to 67.6 million passengers.

1989

February 18: Metro Council approves \$15 million study of rail feasibility.

February 23: Alan Gibbs takes responsibility for scandal over South African granite and tenders his resignation effective August 1989.

March 6: Report of Metro Council Rules Committee concludes that staff have been punished sufficiently for Granite-gate and exonerates Gibbs of misleading Council. The report prompts the first serious discussion of problems in Metro's "corporate culture."

March 15: Prototype dual-mode bus makes first trip through downtown Seattle transit tunnel.

August 11: Metro unveils transit tunnel's Westlake Station.

September 7: Dick Sandaas takes over as Metro Executive Director.

October: PSCOG Assembly votes to reorganize itself.

October 29: American Civil Liberties Union and four citizens file federal suit alleging that Metro Council representation violates Constitutional standard for "one person; one vote."

Metro Council proposes legislation to cut its membership from 45 to 23.

Annual ridership sets new record with 70.4 million riders.

1990

January: Metro inaugurates "Metropolitan Bellevue" circulator route.

March: First production model dual-mode buses arrive.

March 3: State Legislature passes "High Capacity Transit Act" (HB1825, amended by HB2151 in 1991 and ESHB 2610 in 1992) to enable multi-county regional transit planning, management and funding with local option taxes.

April 1: State Legislature passes Growth Management Act (HB2929, amended by ESHB1025 in 1991).

April: Metro, Everett Transit, Community Transit, Snohomish Transit Authority, and State Department of Transportation form "Joint Regional Policy Committee" (JRPC) to oversee planning for "Regional Transit Project" (RTP). State Ferry System re-introduces passenger-only service on Puget Sound.

May: New Seattle Mayor Norm Rice closes Pine Street at Westlake Center to all traffic.

June: Mercer Island City Councilmember Fred Jarrett succeeds George Benson as Metro Transit Chair.

June 21: Penny Peabody defeats Gary Zimmerman in only contested election for chair of the Metro Council.

June 23: Waterfront Streetcar extension to Pioneer Square and International District opens.

August: Pierce Transit joins Metro and Snohomish systems to complete JRPC.

September: U.S. District Judge William Dwyer declares Metro Council unconstitutional and sets April 1992 deadline for its reform (later extended to April 1993).

September 15: Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel opens for regular service.

October: SeaFirst Bank debuts sale of Metro Passes through automatic teller machines.

October 25: PSCOG approves "Vision 2020" plan for regional growth management and transportation.

November 27: Original Mercer Island Floating Bridge sinks in violent storm.

Passage of federal Americans with Disabilities Act requires Metro to achieve full wheel-chair accessibility and provide special services.

Passage of federal Clean Air Act creates new incentives for ridesharing and transit, and disincentives for employer support of parking and other automobile commuter perquisites.

1990 census records King County population of 1.5 million, of whom 502,000 reside in Seattle.

Annual ridership surges to 73.4 million passengers.

1991

June 8: Metro opens North Operating Base, at a total cost of \$55 million.

September: U of W students approve "U-Pass" system.

September 30: PSCOG officially reorganized as Puget Sound Regional Council.

November: Congress appropriates \$300 million to aid RTP planning and development and \$25 million for commuter rail.

November 5: Proposition to merge Metro and King County narrowly fails due to suburban opposition.

Metro agrees to share downtown bus stops with Pierce Transit for express bus service from Tacoma.

Passage of State "Commute Trip Reduction" law penalizes employee perquisites for automobile commuting.

Passage of federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) creates new flexibility in comprehensive transportation planning and system management, and allocates \$151 billion through 1996 to aid transit, roads and rideshare programs.

Texas A&M University study rates Seattle area congestion the fourth worst in the nation.

High gas prices and instability in the Middle East push annual ridership to 74.6 million passengers.

1992

February: King County Councilmember Greg Nickels succeeds Fred Jarrett as Transit Committee Chair.

March 15: Illness compels Penny Peabody to step down as Metro Council chair.

May: After a long delay, ATU and Metro agree to a new contract.

June 4: Metro raises fares and institutes new fares for families and children.

June 6: Northlake Transit Center opens.

July: King County adopts "framework" growth management policies.

August: Metro Council elects Tom Kraft as its new Chair.

September 18: JRPC unveils recommended RTP system with 88 miles of grade-separated light rail, commuter rail from Seattle to Tacoma, and expanded local bus service at a total cost of \$9.3 billion through the year 2020.

October 12: JRPC releases draft RTP "system EIS." which includes evaluations of alternative "Rhododendron Line" and "R2B2" surface rail systems.

October 20: American Public Transit Association names Metro Transit the best large system in the country for the second time.

November 3: New proposition and County Charter amendment to merge Metro and King County and expand the "Metropolitan County Council" pass.

Commuter Transit proposes to revive "Mosquito Fleet" ferry service between Everett, Mukilteo, Whidbey Island, Edmonds and Seattle.

Annual ridership reaches 75.6 million passengers.

1993

January: Ad hoc "Transportation Discussion Group" attacks RTP rail plan. Metro Transit Committee commits to use natural gas for all new motor buses.

March 3: JRPC issues Final RTP System EIS.

March: Governor Mike Lowry's initiative for substantial state aid for RTP fails in Legislature, but funds are appropriated to complete HOV lanes.

May 28: JRPC finalizes RTP System Plan and "Regional Transit Authority" (RTA) boundaries.

June 22: Pierce County Council votes unanimously to join RTA.

July 6: King County Council votes 5 to 4 to join RTA.

July 8: Snohomish County votes unanimously to join RTA.

Summary of Annual Metro Transit Ridership:

Year	Passengers in 000s	% Change Over Prior Year	% of 1972 Ridership
1972*	30,970	- 3.8%	100.0%
1973**	32,393	+ 6.3%	104.6%
1974	35,096	+ 8.3%	114.3%
1975	38,001	+ 8.3%	122.7%
1976	41,646	+ 9.6%	134.5%
1977	44,905	+ 7.8%	145.0%
1978	49,461	+10.1%	159.7%
1979	58,259	+17.8%	188.1%
1980	66,059	+13.4%	213.3%
1981	65,982	- 0.1%	213.1%
1982	63,545	- 3.7%	205.2%
1983	62,514	- 1.6%	201.9%
1984	65,668	+ 5.0%	212.0%
1985	64,774	- 1.4%	209.2%
1986	63,191	- 2.4%	204.0%
1987	61,460	- 2.7%	198.5%
1988#	67,620	+10.0%	218.3%
1989	70,445	+ 4.2%	227.5%
1990	73,392	+ 4.2%	237.0%
1991	74,576	+ 1.6%	240.8%
1992	75,615	+ 1.4%	244.2%

* 1972: Seattle Transit System and Metropolitan Transit Corp. ridership

** 1973: First full year of Metro Transit operation

1988 et seq.: Estimates of about 300,000 "Ride Free Zone" passengers added to annual ridership counts.

Transit Before and After Metro

	1972	1992
Annual Riders	31 million	75.6 million
Routes	31*	240
Route Miles Traveled	20 million	38 million
Annual Hours of Service	1.5 million	2.7 million
Conventional Diesel Buses	467	641
Electric Trolleys	51	155
Streetcars	0	5
Articulated Buses	0	363
Dual-Propulsion Buses	0	236
Vans	0	436
Annual Rideshare Passenger Trips	0	1.8 million
Park-and-Ride Lots	1	42 (plus 41 leased lots)
Transit Centers	0	10
Operating Bases	3*	7 (plus 7 other facilities)
Bus Shelters	na	1,150
Operating Budget	\$14.6 million*	\$168.8 million
Employees	1,100	3,720

*Seattle Transit System figures only

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